

**Speech of the Hon'ble Governor, Assam for the inaugural session of an International Conference on "Animal Agriculture for Doubling Farmers' Income", at Assam Agricultural University Khanapara premises, Guwahati on 27th February 2019**

*Good Morning ladies and gentlemen present.*

*The Vice Chancellor of the University Dr. K.M Bujarbaruah ji, the Secretary North Eastern Council, Shillong and Guest of Honour Sri Ram Muivah ji, Commissioner, Finance and Animal Husbandry, Govt. of Assam and special invitee, Sri Shyam Jagannathan ji, Dean of College of Veterinary science Dr. Bibeka Saikia ji, Director of Research Veterinary, Assam Agricultural University Dr. Niranjana Kalita ji, the delegates from home and abroad, invited guests, the faculty members of the college, Students, Press and Media, Ladies and Gentlemen.*

I am indeed very happy to be here with you this morning to participate in this International Conference on as important as issue like doubling farmers' Income through Animal Husbandry centric activities. As all of you are aware, it is the cherished dream of our beloved and dynamic Prime Minister, Sri Narendra Modi ji to economically empower our farmers numbering which is around 14 crores in the country. We believe, India will see real progress only when her farmers are comfortable doing farming and they will be comfortable only when they are in a position to earn handsomely from the

farming sector. We have technologies, strategies and policies to facilitate their income growth and therefore our Hon'ble Prime Minister has given the call to double their income by 2021 and it is our collective responsibility to achieve this goal. We are also aware that the animal husbandry sector can play an extremely important role in doubling farmers' income within the stipulated time frame.

India's livestock sector is one of the largest in the world with a holding of 16% of the world's livestock population. The contribution of livestock sector to the national economy in terms of GDP is 4.11% and it shares 25.6% of the total contribution of the agricultural sector to the GDP. India has 56 percent of global buffalo population and is ranked No 1 in the world in milk production. We are 3rd in egg and 5th in world's poultry production which is why the sector is an important source of foreign exchange earning. The share of Assam in the country's animal population is 3.25% for livestock and 8.36% for poultry. However, per animal productivity is rather low with resultant lower per capita availability of milk, meat and eggs in the state.

Despite the potential to usher in rapid growth in the livestock sector, paradoxically a reverse trend has been



observed, where livestock farmers are being weaned away from their ancestral methods of livestock farming. The various factors found responsible for a negative attitude towards animal agriculture, is lack of strategic approach encompassing technologies and policies which have to be addressed for making the sector responsive to doubling of farmers income. A full proof convergence model covering the policy makers, resource allocators, technology generators, product handlers and strategists is necessary. Realizing this, Govt. of India has devised several flagship programme including Livestock Mission to evolve innovative science, technologies and strategies to push forward the sector on growth path.

Though the livestock population in India and in Assam in particular shows a healthy scenario, most of these animals are unproductive and has become a bane rather than a boon to the livestock farmers. This has resulted in migration of farmers from Animal Agriculture to much greener pastures in the urban areas. So there is an urgent need to device mechanisms to make livestock farming more lucrative particularly in Assam and entire North East to halt this migration and to ensure additional income to the farmers from its farming.

States like Punjab, Haryana, Andhra Pradesh etc. have very meaningfully integrated livestock in their farming systems and have been much benefited doing so. The NE region has to do likewise.

I have observed that although the productivity of livestock and poultry sector in the region, by and large, is very poor, the consumption level of their products is very high and this has resulted into draining off of the state's exchequer in procuring the needed livestock products from outside the region. This situation has to be reversed and reversed within a reasonable time frame. Fortunately here we have an opportunity to double farmers income which appear to be little difficult without the animal husbandry sector playing its much awaited role. As it is, farming in this part of the country mostly is in a mono-cropping mode. One of the reasons often cited for mono-cropping is the practice to let loose the animals immediately after the *kharif* harvest. If the animals can be kept under controlled condition during *kharif* - *the main crop season*, why then the same cannot be done during *Rabi* season to take double or triple crops? The moment this practice of confining the animals in the *rabi* season is started, the productivity and other managerial conditions of the



animals will also improve leading to higher availability of their products and thus the income.

It is often said that genetic potential of our animals is rather poor compared to the animals in the main land. It is now believed that under climate change scenario, animals of smaller body mass are better suited to withstand the impact of climate change. That notwithstanding, there is an opportunity again offered by the present government to enter into Start Up business venture by the educated youths. Such start ups need to be promoted and supported for production of elite groups of animals for the farmers to access. Similar Start Ups for production and marketing of cheaper but quality animal feed with locally available feed ingredients can be started to support production enhancement of the elite animals being supplied by the first start up group. Start up companies for door to door vaccination service delivery can also be started and also for ICT based monitoring of animal health and production parameters. The animal husbandry departments of all the states must take the advantages of these opportunities by establishing Agri-Incubators for training and skill development of both the livestock/ poultry growers, their input providers and the value chain managers along the

production to consumption value chain of livestock products.

As per my information, no comprehensive program with the involvement of all the factors has yet been taken to double the income of the farmers in the state. We have hardly little over two years to achieve the task. I was therefore thinking to launch a comprehensive program in at least one district of the state to showcase the power of technology, policy and strategy to double the income of the farmers within the remaining two years period. I have already discussed the issue with the Vice Chancellor and after he prepares the road map and identifies the partners from all related departments including the banks and other financing agencies, I am thinking to launch the program in a Mission Mode way under my direct monitoring. I sincerely trust and believe that you all will join hands to make our farmers happier and wealthier. From this initiative we will also know the contribution of livestock and poultry sector in doubling farmers income and accordingly ensure that the sector becomes an inseparable component of the state's agriculture. As we take up this venture alongside the already taken up programmes in the state, we would seek technical and other assistance from delegates attending this seminar today.

With these words, I congratulate Dr Bujarbaruah and his team for bringing the experts in the animal husbandry sector under one roof to discuss ways and means to double the income of our farmers through livestock and poultry which are the integral part of our overall farming system. I also wish that the deliberation will be both fruitful and useful for all of us. Lastly I wish brighter days for the University and a comfortable stay of the delegates who have come from different states of the country and abroad.

Thank you,

Jai Hind